

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claim 3 and amend Claims 1, 5, 6, 30, 39, and 40, as indicated below. The following is a complete listing of claims and replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the present application.

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for motivating a consumer to promptly purchase a product and/or service electronically over a computer network, comprising the steps of:

providing from a server over the computer network to a consumer's computer a program that causes said consumer's computer to:

(a) display on a Web page of a vendor an offer for sale of a product and/or service that may be purchased immediately and directly from said vendor by said consumer via said computer network,

(b) concurrently display on said Web page of said vendor an incentive for purchasing said product and/or service promptly, wherein said program causes said incentive to be initially set to an initial displayed value and then changes said incentive over a period of time to at least one other displayed value, and,

(c) when said consumer makes an electronic purchase of said product and/or service by electronically accepting said offer, provide to said server an indication of acceptance and a current displayed value of said incentive;

registering at said server an initial time at which said incentive is initially displayed;

registering at said server an acceptance time at which said consumer electronically accepts said offer; and

comparing said initial time and said acceptance time to verify said provided current displayed value of said incentive,

wherein said incentive is electronically redeemed for said verified current displayed value.

Claim 2 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said incentive is initially set to a predetermined maximum value.

Claim 3 (canceled). [[The method according to claim 1, wherein said incentive is presented via a Web page.]]

Claim 4 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said incentive is presented via a window.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein said incentive is presented via a Web banner on [[a]] said Web page.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The method according to claim [[3]] 1, wherein said product and/or service offered for sale changes each time said consumer is presented with a new offer.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The method according to claim 6, wherein said new offer is presented to said consumer when said consumer revisits or refreshes said Web page.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein said incentive has a value that decreases over a predetermined period of time.

Claim 9 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said incentive comprises at least one of a discount off a purchase price, a purchase price, an increase in quantity of said product and/or service, and a higher quality product and/or service.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method according to claim 2, wherein said incentive comprises a product and/or service having a variable value, such that, when said variable value is at said maximum value, said incentive comprises a product and/or service having a high value, and such that, when said variable value decreases to a value lower than said maximum value, said incentive comprises a product and/or service having a lower value.

Claim 11 (canceled).

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein a consumer who frequently uses said incentive for purchasing products and/or services is accorded a more favorable incentive than a consumer who infrequently uses said incentive to purchase goods and/or services.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The method according to claim 12, wherein said frequent consumer is accorded a higher maximum incentive value.

Claim 14 (previously presented): The method according to claim 12, wherein said frequent consumer is accorded a higher minimum incentive value.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The method according to claim 12, wherein said frequent consumer is accorded a longer time period for decreasing of said incentive from a maximum value down to a minimum value.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein said offer is presented a specific number of times during a predetermined time period.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The method according to claim 16, wherein said offer is presented to a frequent consumer who frequently uses said method more often than to an infrequent consumer.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein said incentive is based on a profile of said consumer.

Claim 19 (original): The method according to claim 18, wherein said profile comprises information relating to said consumer.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The method according to claim 19, wherein said information relates to a location of said consumer.

Claim 21 (previously presented): The method according to claim 19, wherein said information relates to a preference of said consumer.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The method according to claim 19, wherein said information relates to an historical behavior of said consumer.

Claim 23 (previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein a value of said incentive gradually decreases from a maximum value to a minimum value at a random rate during a predetermined period of time.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein a value of said incentive gradually decreases from a maximum value to a minimum value during a predetermined period of time, and wherein a first value of said incentive at a first point in time in said predetermined period of time may be less than or greater than a second value of said incentive at a second point in time in said predetermined period of time, said second point in time coming immediately prior to or immediately after said first point in time.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein a value of said incentive decreases incrementally over a predetermined period of time.

Claim 26 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said incentive comprises a discount.

Claim 27 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said incentive comprises a purchase price.

Claim 28 (canceled).

Claim 29 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein said incentive comprises a quantity of a product.

Claim 30 (currently amended): A computer-readable storage medium storing code for causing a server to perform a method for motivating a consumer to promptly purchase a product and/or a service electronically over a computer network, the method comprising the steps of:

providing from a server over said computer network to a consumer's computer a program that causes said consumer's computer to:

(a) display on a Web page of a vendor an offer for sale of a product and/or service that may be purchased immediately and directly from said vendor by said consumer via said computer network,

(b) concurrently display on said Web page of said vendor an incentive for purchasing said product and/or service promptly, wherein said program causes said incentive to be initially set to an initial displayed value and then changes said incentive over a period of time to at least one other displayed value, and

(c) when said consumer makes an electronic purchase of said product and/or service by electronically accepting said offer, provide to said server an indication of acceptance and a current displayed value of said incentive;

registering at said server an initial time at which said incentive is initially displayed;

registering at said server an acceptance time at which said consumer indicates an acceptance of said offer; and

comparing said initial time and said acceptance time to verify said provided current displayed value of said incentive,

wherein said incentive is electronically redeemed for said verified currently displayed value.

Claim 31 (canceled).

Claim 32 (previously presented): The storage medium according to claim 30, wherein the method further comprises the step of: initially setting said incentive to a predetermined maximum value.

Claims 33 - 35 (canceled).

Claim 36 (previously presented): A method for motivating a consumer to promptly purchase a product and/or service electronically over a computer network, comprising the steps of:

providing from a server over said computer network to a consumer's computer a program that causes said consumer's computer to:

(a) display an offer for sale of a product and/or service that may be purchased immediately by said consumer via said computer network,

(b) concurrently display an incentive for purchasing said product and/or service promptly over said computer network, wherein said program causes said incentive to be initially displayed as a predetermined non-zero maximum value and then decreases said displayed value over a period of time to at least one other non-zero value lower than said maximum value, and

(c) when said consumer makes an electronic purchase of said product and/or service by electronically accepting said offer, provide to said server an indication of acceptance and a current displayed value of said incentive;

registering at said server an initial time at which said incentive is initially displayed;

registering at said server an acceptance time at which said consumer electronically accepts said offer;

comparing said initial time and said acceptance time to verify said provided current displayed value of said incentive; and

providing said consumer said provided current displayed value of said incentive, if said provided current displayed value of said incentive is verified,

wherein said incentive is electronically redeemed for said verified current displayed value.

Claim 37 (previously presented): An apparatus for motivating a consumer to promptly purchase a product and/or service electronically over a computer network, said apparatus comprising:

means for providing from a server computer over said computer network to a consumer's computer a program that causes said consumer's computer to:



(a) display an offer for sale of a product and/or service that may be purchased immediately by said consumer via said computer network,

(b) concurrently display an incentive for purchasing said product and/or service promptly, wherein said program causes said incentive to be initially displayed as a predetermined non-zero maximum value and then decreases said displayed value over a period of time to at least one other non-zero value lower than said maximum value, and

(c) when said consumer makes an electronic purchase of said product and/or service by electronically accepting said offer, provide to said server an indication of acceptance and a current displayed value of said incentive;

means for registering at said server an initial time at which said incentive is initially displayed;

means for registering at said server an acceptance time at which said consumer electronically accepts said offer;

means for comparing said initial time and said acceptance time to verify said provided current displayed value of said incentive; and

means for providing said consumer said provided current displayed value of said incentive if said provided current displayed value of said incentive is verified,

wherein said incentive is electronically redeemed for said verified current displayed value.

Claim 38 (previously presented): A system for motivating a consumer to promptly purchase a product and/or service electronically over a computer network, said consumer operating a customer terminal operable to act as a client on a network, said system comprising:

a host controller, said host controller comprising a computer operable to act as a server on said computer network and to communicate with said customer terminal over said computer network; and

data storage accessible to said host controller, said data storage storing information relating to said products and/or services for offering for purchase to said consumer, said host controller being operable:

(a) for causing said customer terminal to display an offer for sale of a product and/or service that may be purchased immediately by said consumer via said computer network,

(b) for concurrently causing said customer terminal to display an incentive for purchasing said product and/or service promptly, wherein said incentive is initially displayed as a predetermined non-zero maximum value and said displayed value decreases over a period of time to at least one other non-zero value lower than said maximum value,

(c) for, when said consumer makes an electronic purchase of said product and/or service by electronically accepting said offer, providing to said server an indication of acceptance and a current displayed value of said incentive;

(d) for registering at said server an initial time at which said incentive is initially displayed;

(e) for registering at said server an acceptance time at which said consumer electronically accepts said offer,

(f) for comparing said initial time and said acceptance time to verify said provided current displayed value of said incentive, and

(g) for providing said consumer said provided current displayed value of said incentive if said provided current displayed value of said incentive is verified,

wherein said incentive is electronically redeemed for said verified current displayed value.

Claim 39 (currently amended): A method for motivating a consumer to promptly purchase a product and/or service ~~via electronic media~~, comprising the steps of:

providing via ~~[[said]] an electronic [[media]]~~ mass-communication medium to a consumer's ~~computer a software application~~ display device information that causes said consumer's ~~computer~~ display device to:

(a) display an offer for sale of a product and/or service ~~[[that]]~~ from a vendor, wherein said product and/or service may be purchased immediately and directly from said vendor by said consumer via ~~[[said]]~~ electronic media,

(b) concurrently display an incentive for purchasing said product and/or service promptly, wherein said ~~electronic media~~ information provided via said mass-communication medium causes said incentive to be initially displayed as a predetermined non-zero maximum value and then decreases said displayed value over a period of time to at least one other non-zero value lower than said maximum value, and

(c) when said consumer makes an electronic purchase of said product and/or service by electronically accepting said offer, provide to said electronic media an indication of acceptance and a current displayed value of said incentive;

registering via said electronic media an initial time at which said incentive is initially displayed;

registering via said electronic media an acceptance time at which said consumer electronically accepts said offer;

comparing via said electronic media said initial time and said acceptance time to verify said provided current displayed value of said incentive; and

providing said consumer via said electronic media said provided current displayed value of said incentive if said provided current displayed value of said incentive is verified,

wherein said incentive is electronically redeemed for said verified current displayed value.

Claim 40 (currently amended): The method according to claim 39, wherein said electronic ~~media comprises~~ mass-communication medium includes at least one of: a television, a radio, a visual display, a motion picture, a telephone, a periodical, and a computer network.